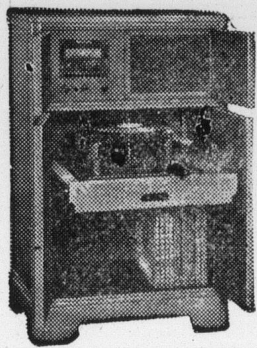


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## TWO NEW ORLEANS MEN WERE FIRST NEGRO MILLIONAIRES

As far back as the halcyon days of King Solomon and Egypt's Pharaohs, there have been fabulously wealthy Negroes.

One of the first in America was sea captain Paul Cuffe who built up a small fortune at an early age with a fleet of sailing ships that plied the Atlantic between Boston, the West Indies and England. When he died in 1817, he left an estate of \$20,000. There is a granite memorial to him at Westport, Mass.

Before the Civil War, Negroes were counted among rich plantation owners, both free-born and freedom bought. Louisiana led all other states in black planter aristocracy. When Martin Donat died in 1848, he owned 89 slaves as well as notes and mortgages valued at \$46,000. The free Negroes of Charleston on the eve of the war possessed a million in real estate and nearly 4,000 slaves. The finest hotel in town was owned by free Jehu Jones.

Two New Orleans men were probably the first Negro millionaires in America. Francois Delacroix bought his freedom for \$2,000, became a tailor and amassed amazing wealth in seven figures. Catholic Thomy Lafon, a free Negro money lender of French-Haitian blood, became a millionaire from his operations that started in a grocery store. He gave away a fortune during his lifetime, left a half million to religious and educational institutions, mostly white.

Not all the wealthy Negroes of the 19th Century were in the South, however. The richest was a Philadelphia Negro, Co. John McKee, whose name recently gained front page prominence when his grandson quit "passing" as a Wall Street Lawyer and went into court to claim the trust fund of \$800,000 left by McKee. However, the 67-year-old attorney died before the courts could settle his claim.

The original Colonel McKee left \$2,000,000 when he died in 1902. He was a Virginia Negro, born free, who was apprenticed to a bricklayer at an early age. Later he went to Philadelphia to work in a livery stable and then a restaurant. After marrying his employer's daughter and taking over the business, he began to dabble in real estate. He ran up a fortune by providing homes in Philadelphia for migrating Negroes in exchange for property owned by them in the South. One such transaction netted him lands rich in soft coal. With the money he made on his Southern real estate, he invested in property in the North and at one time was supposed to have owned 1,000,000 acres of land. At the time of his death, his property included 400 Philadelphia houses and 20,000 acres in Steuben County, New York. He was founder and owner of McKee City, New Jersey (which still exists today with a population of 185).

### LONDON NOTES

Sunday, July 3rd, Mr. James Brook chartered a bus which carried a number of Londoners to Brantford for the annual sessions of the B.M.E. Conference.

London delegates to the B.M.E. Conference were: Mrs. S. Johnson, Mr. G. Donaldson and Garnet Brooks. At this conference Mr. G. Donaldson was ordained and assigned to a post in Owen Sound. Mr. Clarence Johnson was given the position of assistant to Rev. J. H. Johnson.

Mr. William Myers of Toronto was a guest at the Jenkins-Howson home for the week end.

Mrs. Parker accompanied by her daughter, Mrs. B. Allen, of Toronto has been visiting friends and relatives in London recently.

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